



## WEST SANTA ANA BRANCH

### Pacific Electric ROW / West Santa Ana Branch Corridor

#### Alternatives Analysis

#### Steering Committee Meeting #1

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

2:00 – 3:30 pm

SCAG Main Office

818 West Seventh Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor

Board Room

Los Angeles, CA 90017

### Meeting Notes

Attendees	Organization
Hon. Art Brown	OCTA & City of Buena Park
Hon. Diane DuBois	LACMTA
Julie Moore	Supervisor Knabe's Office, District 4
Eduardo Adame	Supervisor Molina's Office, District 1
Danny Wu	City of Anaheim
Hon. Oscar Hernandez	City of Bell
Pedro Carrillo	City of Bell
Hon. Scott Larsen	City of Bellflower
Mike Egan	City of Bellflower
Hon. Bruce Barrows	City of Cerritos
Hon. Phil Luebben	City of Cypress
Hon. Frank Gurule	City of Cudahy
Shannon DeLong	City of Downey
Hon. Bill Dalton	City of Garden Grove
Keith Jones	City of Garden Grove
Hon. Ralph Rodriguez	City of La Palma
G. Daniel Ojeda	City of Lynwood
Hon. Michele Martinez	City of Santa Ana
David Biondolillo	City of Santa Ana
Hon. Maria Davila	City of South Gate
Alvie Betancourt	City of South Gate
Hon. Carol Warren	City of Stanton
Hon. Mike McCormick	City of Vernon
Kevin Wilson	City of Vernon
Hon. Gil Hurtado	Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Hon. Mark Waldman	Orange County Council of Governments
Hasan Ikhata	SCAG
Philip Law	SCAG
Wendy Garcia	OCTA
David Sosa	Caltrans, District 7

Attendees	Organization
Susan Bok	City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation
Karen Heit	Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Jerry Wood	Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Mike Kodama	Orangeline Development Authority

## Welcome and Introductions

H. Ikhata, Executive Director of SCAG, began the meeting with welcoming remarks. A. Brown and D. DuBois, co-chairs of the Steering Committee, also welcomed members. Participants then introduced themselves. A. Brown and D. DuBois described the purpose of the Project and the meeting. They described the roles of the Steering Committee members as the following: a) to represent their communities, b) advise the project team, and c) serve as a sounding board throughout the study process.

## Project Overview and Presentation

P. Law provided a presentation of the project overview, background and current phase of the process. N. Michali followed with a background on the technical approach and analysis that the team will be conducting. She also described the findings of the in-person interviews with over 40 Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee Members that the team had conducted as the first step in the public involvement process. K. Padilla then provided an overview of the community meetings, and the community outreach approach. N. Michali presented the draft informational displays for the community meetings.

## Open Discussion

Meeting participants then asked questions and offered the following comments and observations about a range of issues and concerns including environmental impacts and funding.

B. Barrows (City of Cerritos) stated that environmental issues, i.e. noise, safety, and air quality, were brought up during interviews, and they should be included in the informational description to be provided about modes.

Another member suggested that if reduction of emissions is considered, then discussion will lead to the type of mode and type of technology that should be used very early in the analysis. It was suggested that there would not be enough data to determine emissions reductions by various modes in time for June community meetings.

N. Michali illustrated through a Power Point slide that later in the FTA process more comprehensive data, including potential air quality impacts, would be compiled as the study progresses. The community meetings would also generate input on community priorities.

## Review of Community Meeting Information Boards

On the board depicting future conditions of the project area via a map of projects to be completed by 2035, a member suggested that the Orangeline should be more prominently indicated, as well other potential improvements or systems being studied in Santa Ana. It was also suggested that MagLev service should be included as a High Speed Rail option, if the Study was indeed technology neutral.

D. DuBois (City of Lakewood) advised that it is important to provide information and education so that community members can effectively evaluate options (modes). The general public is not likely to know the meaning of terms such as DMU, Steel Wheel, etc. She urged the use of non-technical words on the display boards, as much as possible.

S. Bok (LADOT) asked what possible configuration/alignment would be followed to reach Union Station/Downtown Los Angeles from Paramount?

- N. Michali responded: There were several options under consideration, but definitely the intent of the study was to identify an alignment that would connect to Union Station. P. Law further explained that determining where the public wants to go would be an important factor in identifying the northern connection.

R. Rodriguez (City of La Palma) suggested that “greening of the PE ROW” (without a transportation system) should be an option.

P. Luebben (City of Cypress) suggested that a No Build option may be simply adding a bike trail or running path on the ROW.

M. Martinez (City of Santa Ana) stated that community members have expressed a key concern about pedestrian and bicyclist safety related to getting to and from a transportation system, and that she felt it was an important consideration in the planning of any new system.

S. Larsen (City of Bellflower) described how much use the Class 1 Bike Trail on the PE ROW in Bellflower is getting. He felt that if there was a new bicycle system, residents in nearby neighborhoods would readily use it to get to work. He further stated that the Bellflower Bike Trail should be preserved even if there are other changes to accommodate a new transportation system. He suggested that an elevated transit alignment with a bike trail underneath be considered.

S. Bok (LADOT) stated that since the ROW has an average width of 90-100 feet, there was enough space to accommodate transit plazas, trails for bikes, pedestrian pathways, and other “beautiful places and amenities.”

M. Waldman (OCCOG) asked what would be the cost to run the system underground? He suggested that an underground alternative should be considered to lessen community impacts near residential neighborhoods.

P. Luebben (City of Cypress) asked whether funding for building a new system is available?

- P. Law explained that, while funding for the portion of the project that runs through LA County is likely available through Measure R, there was currently no funding available for the Orange County portion.
- G. Hurtado (City of South Gate) asked whether funding for this project would “draw funds” from already funded projects? P. Law responded: There is funding allocated to this project as it is included on the list of recommended projects to receive Measure R funding.

R. Rodriguez (City of La Palma) asked whether there was a representative on the Steering Committee from the High Speed Rail Authority?

- P. Law said that, while the organization had been invited to participate, no member had been appointed to the Committee.

## How Should Options be Evaluated?

K. Padilla again stated that the community meetings would be a vehicle to capture public input about priorities that could then be used to develop evaluation criteria for alternatives screening. During the meetings, which are designed to be interactive, community members would be asked to provide their opinions on the question, “How should Options (Transit Modes) be evaluated?”

## Criteria for Evaluation

Steering Committee members then provided their suggestions on criteria for evaluating options:

- Is the proposed mode convenient? Affordable? Clean (in terms of air quality)?
- Its cost to build and ride
- Is there enough ridership to result in a cost-effective solution?
- Safety and security concerns
- Vibration impacts
- At-grade operations impacts to houses and businesses
- Cost vs. benefit—specifically, what are the benefits we get from the system?
- Safety (at grade vs. grade separated)
- Catenary—the aesthetics and safety
- Noise levels between different options
- The maintenance cost of each mode
- Resulting travel time—end to end
- Ability of Right of Way to accommodate multiple users/activities
- Connections to other modes/systems
- Identify whether there is a need to take (private) property (by each option)
- Consider how to show that there may be proposed links-- north of Union Station.
- Ability to accommodate other projects proposed for ROW

## Other Comments

Members also offered the following observations and questions:

- There's a need to clarify as much as possible the differences between options so the public will have a better understanding of the trade-offs (or benefits and impacts).
- How does the proposed system connect regionally?
- (Future) SR-91/I-605 interchange improvements will impact mobility; this should also be considered.
- Differences between arterials and freeways between counties (in terms of) connectivity issues should be highlighted.
- Congestion at Corridor Freeways:
  - The proposed transportation system will be an alternative to freeways.
  - Proposed system increases access to educational opportunities
  - Corridor transportation improvement will be cheaper than widening freeways (taking of homes) and other community impacts.
- There's a growing number of people going from LA to OC for work.
- Heavy traffic/intersection impacts are frequently due to freeways on-off ramps.
- There's a lack of transit options (in the PE Corridor)
- Connections to transit, such as shuttle and buses, are not always readily available.
- Schedule frequency doesn't seem to support usage.
- Will the proposed system provide mid-day access?
- Learn from other rail projects!

## Next Steps

P. Law thanked all participants and informed them that the date for the next Steering Committee meeting was on July 21 in Buena Park. The results of community meetings would be presented, along with proposed initial evaluation criteria. A draft Purpose and Need and an Initial Set of Alternatives would be also presented for Steering Committee members' review and comment.